DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 297 075 UD 026 306

AUTHOR	Kozol, Jonathan
TITLE	What the Candidates Have Not Been Saying.
INSTITUTION	Education Writers Association, Washington, DC.; Institute for Educational Leadership, Washington, D.C.
SPONS AGENCY	John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, Chicago, IL.
PUB DATE	88
NOTE	19p.; Paper presented at the National Seminar of the Education Writers Association (New Orleans, LA, April 16, 1988).
AVAILABLE FROM	Education Writers Association, 1001 Connecticut Avenue, NW, Suite 310, Washington, DC 20036 (first copy free, $3.50 for additional copies, 3 copies for $10.00).
PUB TYPE	Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Viewpoints (120)
EDRS PRICE	MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS	*Compensatory Education; *Economically Disadvantaged; *Educational Finance; Elementary Secondary Education; *Equal Education; Federal Aid; Federal Programs; *Government Role; *Politics of Education; Private Financial Support; Property Taxes; School Business Relationship; School District Autonomy; School Taxes; State Aid; States Powers
IDENTIFIERS	*Direct Grant System; Education Consolidation Improvement Act Chapter 1

ABSTRACT

Jonathan Kozol challenges politicians of both parties to confront the economic and political issues that deprive the poor of equal education. Criticisms of current policies include the following: (1) dependence on property taxes penalizes the poor; (2) local control protects privilege and oppresses minorities; (3) education has been removed from the area of social justice and made dependent on private charity; and (4) students and schools are blamed for their own failure. Solutions are the following: (1) direct funding for the deprived; (2) massive compensatory education programs; (3) a realistic minimum wage; (4) emphasis on rewards, not blame; (5) end dependence on local property taxes; and (6) federal guarantee of equal distribution of funding. U,S. Representative William Goodling's (Rep.-PA) response includes the following: (1) local control assures accountability of decision making; (2) the Federal Government's role is to ensure equal education for special populations, and to disseminate information; (3) distribution of state spending is dependent on each state's needs; (4) private business should be even more involved in education; and (5) Congress has reauthorized all federal elementary and secondary education programs. The response of former Texas Governor Mark White, a Democrat, includes the following: (1) attention must be given to how funding is spent on the local level; (2) Congress has been handicapped by the Reagan Administration's lack of cooperation; and (3) Kozol's proposal for direct funding for the disadvantaged should be supported. (FMW)

8-1-88

ED297075

What The Candidates Have Not Been Saying

By Jonathan Kozol

with responses by
The Honorable William F. Goodling
and
The Honorable Mark White

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

X This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL IN MICROFICHE ONLY HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Bert Menninga
Education Writers Association
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

A paper commissioned by the Media Resource Project on Literacy of the Education Writers Association in cooperation with the Institute for Educational Leadership under a grant from the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation.

UD026-26

What The Candidates Have Not Been Saying

Copyright © 1988 by the Education Writers Association.

All rights reserved. This paper may not be reproduced in any form or by any electronic or mechanical means, including information storage and retrieval systems, for book or commercial publication without permission from the Education Writers Association.

Published 1988
Printed in the United States of America

The Education Writers Association (EWA), founded in 1947, is the professional association of education reporters and writers. Its project on literacy was established to help journalists cover the issue of illiteracy/literacy in ways that reflect the complexities and far-reaching implications of the issues. This paper, one of several commissioned by EWA during 1988 that deal with specific facets of literacy, was first presented on April 16, 1988, at the EWA National Seminar in New Orleans, Louisiana. It was prepared to illuminate the positions of the presidential candidates on education and literacy. Other papers look at literacy in the context of the newspaper reading habits of young adults, math literacy, and the reporting on and coverage of literacy and poverty in the United States. EWA maintains a clearinghouse of resources on literacy and publishes a monthly newsletter, *The Literacy Beat*. The staff is prepared to help writers make contacts or otherwise obtain ideas and information about the issue of literacy. Please contact Lisa Walker, executive director, or Anne Lewis, consultant, at 1001 Connecticut Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036; (202) 429-9680.

The views expressed herein do not necessarily reflect those of the staff and officers of the Education Writers Association, the Institute for Educational Leadership, or the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Jonathan Kozol is the author of *Illiterate in America* and *Rachel and Her Children: Homeless Families in America.* A graduate of Harvard University, Mr. Kozol has been a Rhodes Scholar, a teacher in the Boston Public Schools, and a Rockefeller Fellow.

William F. Goodling (R-Penn., 19th Dist.) is the ranking minority member of the House Subcommittee on Elementary, Secondary and Vocational Education. In 1987, he sponsored legislation creating a new program under Chapter I called Even Start, which is designed to engage functionally illiterate parents in the education of their pre-school-age children. Mr. Goodling has been a school superintendent, principal, and teacher. He is a graduate of the University of Maryland and Western Maryland University.

Mark White served as Governor of Texas from 1983 to 1987. As Governor, he supported a massive effort to reform the Texas Public Schools. Mr. White also has served as an Assistant Attorney General in the Texas Division of Insurance, Banking and Securities, and as Texas Secretary of State. He received his bachelor's and law degrees from Baylor College and now engages in private law practice in Houston, Texas.

Jonathan Kozol

What The Candidates Have Not Been Saying

(Delivered at the National Seminar of the Education Writers Association, New Orleans, Louisiana April 16, 1988)

A recent advertisement in the *New York Times* made the observation that school reforms of recent years have done some good for as many as 25% of children in the public schools. Some 75% have not profited.

It will come as no surprise to anybody here to learn that those who have not benefited from the recent rhetoric and fervor are, with few exceptions, those who are the poorest children in America. I say it would be no surprise because it is, in large part, the same children who have failed to benefit from any of the other social and financial policies of recent years. Tax cuts have benefited affluent families, while food stamps were diminished for the poor.

The role of private corporations as school partners has benefited first and most consistently schools which were already at the top and in which, as *The Wall Street Journal* has reported, parents were best equipped to use their corporate ties to bring embellishments into their already favored children's lives.

The emphasis on local control has heightened the alacrity with which some affluent communities provide extras (for example, so-called "Super Schools" in California) for children who already are doing well and now will get a little more. It is no surprise that children of such parents, who also have the background to insist on strong curricula and, as in the past, to entice sophisticated teachers to their schools, are doing a bit better. For the other 75%, and especially for those who are the poorest, life has grown more perilous and life conditions have grown worse.

Since 1981, family homelessness has grown five-fold. Evictions in Denver have increased eight-fold. Public housing, cut off from federal funding and dependent on the whim and scarce resources of local government, now has a waiting list of 18 years in New York City, 20 years in Miami.

The workings of the market, meanwhile, have transformed employment in America: 16 million traditional jobs have disappeared since 1980. Half of all the jobs created since then pay little more than minimum wage, which has been frozen now for seven years. In the same years, rents have doubled in our major cities. Six million

❝ Dropouts and graduates alike in these dysfunctional and economically segregated schools flood the streets, have babies, turn to drugs, then to homeless shelters, then to prison. The only major housing renovation or construction in the past eight years are shelters and jails: the poorhouse and the prison. ❞

American families now pay 50% or more of their income for rent. Three million families are living doubled up illegally with others.

Half the 500,000 homeless children in America do not regularly go to school or do not go to school at all. Those who do are likely to be two years behind grade level. Infant death rates for children of the homeless are two to three times the rate for affluent children.

"We're getting out of the housing business," said a White House official in 1985. "Period!" They did; and the results are seen in every city of the nation.

This is the bitter ethos of the last eight years.

"Some people are better than others," wrote Charles Murray. "They deserve more of society's rewards." This could be the pedagogic banner of the Reagan years.

In low-income Lawrence, Massachusetts, according to a press report, the average expenditure for educating a child is about $2,000. In high-income Weston, Connecticut, the average investment is $6,000. There's a great deal of excellence in Weston. There's unabated misery, illiteracy and hopelessness in Lawrence.

"Last year," wrote the *New York Times* in 1986, "the richest New Jersey districts spent about $1,100 more per pupil than did the poorest districts." The spending gap, the *Times* reported, was almost double what it was four years before.

"In Texas," according to *Time* magazine, "the one hundred top ranked school districts spent an average of $5,500 a year per child...and the bottom one hundred spent only $1,800..." Is this democracy? No, it is not. It is inherited meritocracy, determined by the accident of birth.

Thus it is that children in the richest schools are learning a bit more history, a bit more literature, more math, and possibly more French and Spanish before they go to college, while dropout rates in some of our major cities soar beyond 50% and, in New York City, as the Urban League reports, the dropout rate of black students reaches 72%. Dropouts and graduates alike in these dysfunctional and economically segregated schools flood the streets, have babies, turn to drugs, then to homeless shelters, then to prison. The only major housing renovation or construction in the past eight years are shelters and jails: the poorhouse and the prison.

In 1981, in a stunning symbolic act, the administration cancelled the White House

“ Not since the Great Depression have so many children and their parents been reduced to total destitution. This is one legacy of the Age of Excellence, the age in which we were exhorted to stand tall but not to ask whose damaged dreams and ruined lives we stood upon or trampled. ”

Conference on Children and Youth for the first time in this century. It is the same administration which excluded hungry children from school lunches and school breakfasts, appointed an Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights who was opposed to all that has been meant by civil rights, and attempted to veto the 1988 Civil Rights Restoration Act on the eve of the anniversary of the death of Martin Luther King, Jr.

This is the administration which would like us to teach character and values to our children. We have to ask: What values? What character?

Not since the Great Depression have so many children and their parents been reduced to total destitution. This is one legacy of the Age of Excellence, the age in which we were exhorted to stand tall but not to ask whose damaged dreams and ruined lives we stood upon or trampled.

While Secretary of Education William Bennett's rhetoric is criticized by Democrats, much of his agenda has now been assimilated as unstated but accepted wisdom. That agenda rests upon the notion that the failure of poor children in the nation's schools is not primarily a consequence of basic and systemic inequality in our society, but is the result of 1) a lack of will or motivation on the part of unsuccessful learners, 2) permissive standards on the part of the school systems, 3) adulterated curriculum, 4) insufficient emphasis on Western civilization and the values it purveys, 5) an indulgent ethos fostered by the pedagogic values of the 1960s, which has been corrosive of our nation's power to compete with other nations, 6) parental "failure" to participate in early education of the child, 7) the role of an "intrusive" federal government.

Recommendations favor tougher tests, a longer school day and a longer school year, values, character, tradition, discipline, and a lowered federal role. Favored channels of reform are state and local government, the private sector, volunteers—and "leaders," as tough as possible, in local schools.

The press, for reasons I don't understand, fails to make the seemingly essential points provoked by this agenda.

• Local control of education is traditionally conservative and, because funding of the local public schools is tied directly to the local property tax, which is inherently unequal, local control means greater pressure for excellence in one school district at the expense of equity for districts with less affluence and which are less politically empowered.

• The state and local emphasis is

“ The present enthusiasm for local control, no matter how cheerful and innocent it may appear, cannot mask its real agenda. ”

welcomed by governors and certain mayors. It gives them a high profile. Historically and financially, however, it is the local agencies of government that fostered inequality and the federal government that has demanded equity and justice. The states opposed desegregation of public facilities and, indeed, employed the term "states' rights" as a euphemism for perpetuated racial injustice. The cities opposed desegregation of their schools and employed the term "local control" to justify their obdurate resistance. In both cases, it was federal action which was needed to achieve desegregation. The present enthusiasm for local control, no matter how cheerful and innocent it may appear, cannot mask its real agenda. That agenda is retaliatory and punitive: to turn the clock back to a time when local governance protected privilege and left the powerless unrepresented.

• Emphasis on the private sector as a so-called partner in our children's education masks the fact that one of the two partners—government—has now defaulted. What it really means, therefore, is private generosity as a substitute for public obligation. In this respect, it means that children in low-income families will be told their destiny depends on charity—good deeds of corporations—and will be derived no longer from the recognition of their right to decent education.

The emphasis on privatization is another way of getting government out of the role of fostering democracy. Massive public relations efforts by the corporations lead the press repeatedly to see the private sector role as selfless and benign. In fact, there is a selfish reason for the role of corporations in this seemingly benevolent role. It is part of an unspoken trade-off that the corporations find attractive. Corporate taxes are reduced. Corporate profits are increased. Corporations understand that modest private sector aid to education, as a pay-off for reduction in their taxes, is a way of muting and deflecting criticism.

For public education, businesses create commissions, partnerships, and such. Some adopt a school or school system. A wealthy man in New York City offers to send the children of his former public school to college. The press makes much of this but never asks if the eccentric kindliness of one man or one corporation—random charity—is to be the substitute for equal education. First we create unequal schools in a divided nation. We heighten inequality by tax cuts for the rich. Then we send rich people out to offer gifts to those who have been cheated.

A classic partnership, The Boston Compact, noncritically applauded by the press, has no discernible, sustained effect in altering the lot of the poor children in the Boston schools. Having demonstrated its inadequacy, it is now to be the model for a comparable effort in New York City. What are the corporations that comprise this so-called compact? Banks are conspicuous in this role in Boston. Why should poor people rest their

“ The slave-breaker, not the liberator of slaves, becomes the prototype for black school principals in the Age of Reagan. Their job is to make sure the ghetto school is calm and orderly, not to question its existence or to seek its abolition. Abolitionists would not receive White House Awards for excellence in 1988. ”

faith in banks that have provided an essential underpinning for the redevelopment of urban neighborhoods that have displaced them from their homes—banks that have designed the red-line mortgage patterns which have kept their cities segregated? First we drive them from their homes and lock them into undesired neighborhoods. Then we form a business partnership to build a homeless shelter and send executives to tutor in the third-rate schools we have created. First we break the social compact of democracy. Then we form a business compact to dispense our charity.

• In the same way, volunteerism—one of the key words of the Reagan agenda—substitutes charity for social justice. The spouses—generally wives—of those who profit from the federal cuts that decimate the education of the poor go out two afternoons a week and tutor. The wives of those who dispossess the poor—realtors, for instance—volunteer to feed them lunch at a soup kitchen. Thus, rights are turned to gifts and thus the clock is turned back to the 1950s when the Junior League did what it could for the “unfortunates” of our society but no one spoke of justice.

• The pedagogic heroes favored by the new agenda are described as “leaders” and especially “tough leaders.” Their function is to keep the children of the poor in line, and those who do it best are honored by the White House. Not the dream of Dr. King, but Joe Clark’s stick, or bat, receives the praise in 1988. An old agenda identified with Booker T. Washington—self-improvement, no complaints—is superimposed over the ethics of W.E.B. Dubois and Frederick Douglass. The slave-breaker, not the liberator of slaves, becomes the prototype for black school principals in the Age of Reagan. Their job is to make sure the ghetto school is calm and orderly, not to question its existence or to seek its abolition. Abolitionists would not receive White House Awards for excellence in 1988.

The emphasis on drugs, teen sex, and pregnancy complete the picture, turning attention from oppression to the dark pathology that it has spawned. In this context, a good prison warden is the ideal principal. Joe Clark is the ideal prison warden.

• So the answer is school reform by terror, test and exhortation, all somehow subsumed in one word, “basics,” a term somehow suggestive of the basic training of the military. The goal is something known as “standards”—presumably more Western literature and culture, though even here the definition of the basics is selective. We are exhorted to read James Madison, but not

“Education writers would, I think, be quite embarrassed if they looked at old news clippings that describe the same kinds of ‘unique’ schools 10, 15, and 20 years ago, and observed how fatuously these schools were praised, how little impact they exerted, and how rapidly they were forgotten. In the 1960s they were known as ‘more effective schools.’”

Tom Paine—Ralph Waldo Emerson, but not Henry David Thoreau. Critical thinking is encouraged in the narrow sense of fine analysis, not in the broader sense of the capacity to criticize accepted sanctimony.

• To the extent that anything decent is proposed, it is almost always on a pilot basis, as if to say, "We'll find out what will work, and then we'll do it—maybe—some day later on." What will pilot programs do for children who are living now in 1988? After the pilot program is complete, will we give them back their childhood to live again?

• The identification of a handful of impressive schools (so-called "schools of excellence" or "model schools," "Carnegie Schools," whatever form it takes) is another way of masking our inaction. In every decade, one can find a number of schools which serve poor children well, generally because of a unique and charismatic principal. But charisma can't be universalized. Isolation of these special cases (awarding them honors, sending Mr. Bennett for a visit) simply fuels a false euphoria that tells the public something new is going on. Education writers would, I think, be quite embarrassed if they looked at old news clippings that describe the same kinds of "unique" schools 10, 15, and 20 years ago, and observed how fatuously these schools were praised, how little impact they exerted, and how rapidly they were forgotten. In the 1960s they were known as "more effective schools." In the 1970s they were known as "magnet schools." In Boston there was an innovation known as "school-within-a-school"—that was 1978. I note that Mr. Shanker has proposed this as a new idea for 1988. So there is no sense of history at all. I can see why journalists are drawn to schools like these. They make good copy. They provide an up-beat story. But most of all they spread the myth that if the rest of us just had more energy, rolled up our sleeves, and used the proper jargon, politicians could redress injustice in America, cost free, and not raise taxes for the people who elect them.

The only energy in the debate has come from Mr. Bennett. His views, no matter what we think of them, have won and merited attention, largely because they are conveyed in a fresh dialect, unencumbered by the stylistic tedium that stifles interest, and presented with a gusto that reflects his willingness to struggle openly for his beliefs. There will be no interesting forensics, and no opportunity to force the public to significant decisions unless the Democratic nominee is willing to confront the views of Mr. Bennett with a degree of verve that rivals his.

When people are afraid to say what they

“ I would say that ethical societies deal first with those in greatest pain, that excellence for some should take a second place to equity for all, that we should, therefore, launch a passionate and massive rescue operation for the children of what are no less than subjugated Third World colonies within our nation... ”

believe, their only recourse is to rhetoric without conviction. The reason the Democratic candidates are dull on education is that they are unprepared to speak the only words that really matter on this issue: The poorest children in America have undergone a savage onslaught in the past eight years. The reason we need to deal with it is not self-interest but compassion. The way to deal with it is by the use of federal funds.

If Democratic politicians are to launch a real debate, they will have to throw away the glossary of stale cliches ("values," "rigor," "tests," and "blame") which place the burden on the poor to prove their worth and speak, instead, of lifting up the poorest children of our nation. By stimatizing Democrats as those who "tax and spend," Republicans have managed to discredit the idea of justice. The Democrats have been afraid to say in simple words: "The most important role of government is to defend the lives of children. If it costs more, we spend more. If it costs a lot, we spend a lot. If we have to tax the surplus income of the affluent to make a just society, we do it." When Democrats begin to speak like that, Americans will have a genuine election.

What would I say, were I a candidate for public office?

I would say that ethical societies deal first with those in greatest pain, that excellence for some should take a second place to equity for all, that we should, therefore, launch a passionate and massive rescue operation for the children of what are no less than subjugated Third World colonies within our nation: a social and pedagogic Marshall Plan for very poor Americans.

I would speak of universal preschool for poor children; of guaranteed health care, housing, and nutrition for these children; of parent literacy programs on the scale that we have never seen in this society; of a multitude of extra and expensive reading programs for the grade school, massive catch-up programs for the secondary level, restoration of pre-college programs, and billions of dollars for college scholarships and loans.

I would not ask millionaires to fill the role of Mr. Lang. I would ask America to fill that role.

I would ask for many more carrots, fewer sticks.

I would ask for a minimum wage that bears some real connection to the cost of food and housing in America.

“ ...I would call for the end of a dual schooling system in this nation. We haven't heard these kinds of recommendations in the last few years. Nor have we heard these kinds of recommendations in this year's campaign. ”

I would call for an end to the property tax as the primary means of funding public education.

I would call for the government to guarantee the equal funding of the education of all children.

In short, I would call for the end of a dual schooling system in this nation. We haven't heard these kinds of recommendations in the last few years. Nor have we heard these kinds of recommendations in this year's campaign. When we do, the candidates will no longer seem dull.

Responding to the remarks by Jonathan Kozol were U.S. Representative William Goodling (Rep.-Pa.) and former Texas governor Mark White.

Mr. Goodling, the ranking minority member of the U.S. House of Representatives Subcommittee on Elementary, Secondary and Vocational Education, sponsored legislation creating a new program under Chapter I called Even Start, which is designed to encourage functionally illiterate parents to read to their pre-school-age children.

While governor, Mr. White, who now engages in private law practice in Houston, proposed and supported an agenda of massive educational reforms for Texas, an agenda which he believes ultimately contributed to his losing bid for reelection in 1986.

William F. Goodling

I have great respect for Jonathan Kozol, but I must admit that I have little respect for the first 35 minutes of his speech. I am now placed in the unfortunate position of confining these remarks to a rebuttal. Also, if you do not know who I am, I would like to introduce myself to the moderator. I believe my distinguished Chairman, Augustus Hawkins, would tell you, "if you want to do anything about education, you must see Bill Goodling." I carry the ball, almost alone, to make sure that there are no cuts in the school lunch program. I am the person who fought back the block grants for special education and for Chapter 1. If you do not know who I am, then it is because I am a work horse, not a show horse.

First, Mr. Kozol has a misconception of the process of how our government operates in Washington. I believe Mr. Kozol has lost sight of the roles each level of government should play in supporting education. I am a strong advocate of local control.

When I was a teacher, and a principal, and a superintendent of schools, I learned that the strongest voices in ensuring quality education were local people, such as parents. Local control assures that the people who are most directly effected will make the decisions, which in turn guarantees accountability.

This is not to say that the federal government does not play a role, quite the contrary. Education is a national concern. We have a responsibility to assure quality education for special populations of children, such as the handicapped and the disadvantaged, and to disseminate information about successful exemplary education programs which can be replicated by the states and local jurisdictions.

Mr. Kozol also criticizes the discrepancies in spending per child in education. He has unfortunately mixed apples and oranges by comparing cities in different states. I would agree that I would like to see a more comparable spending per pupil when comparing different states' average spending; however, these matters are controlled by the states and dependent on their individual

deficits. But, of greater importance, equalizing state distributions of spending per pupil is governed by the Constitution of the United States. The Supreme Court in *Rodriguez v. San Antonio Independent School District* held that the distribution formula for the equalizing of funds per pupil for education must be rational in relation to the state's needs.

Mr. Kozol also criticizes business and education partnerships, volunteerism, and tax code changes. Two years ago, Congress made major changes in the tax code. Although we have not had adequate time to assess all the effects of this new law, we do know that business clearly is now paying more. For fiscal year 1987, the United States collected $84 billion in business income taxes, up from $63 billion the year before. In 1985 General Dynamics Corporation did not pay any taxes, and this past year [it] paid $270 million. This is due to the major changes in the tax reform.

With respect to business and education partnerships, not only must we keep business involved, we also should be working to get them more involved. Our nation's people man the jobs created by business and industry; it is our life blood. We must work with business and industry to assess what their needs are and how the education system can help supply a workforce ready to meet those needs.

As to volunteers, I understand that we will need professional teachers, but I fail to understand how one can criticize people volunteering their time and knowledge for helping others. When I was a principal during the baby boom after World War II, I had to determine whether or not I would hire a teacher according to which person could breathe better than the next. At that time, we were experiencing a great teacher shortage. We are now facing a similar shortage. Studies indicate that in the next five years, we will need 185,000 new teachers per year and will be producing only 140,000 new teachers to fill those vacancies.

Finally, I would like to remind Mr. Kozol that the Congress of the United States is a two to one majority of Governor White's party. I happen to believe that if the right person were Secretary of Education, that person would provide the leadership to direct the Congress.

Within this Congress, we have been busy providing extra support and guidance in education. As a member of the House Budget Committee, I am happy to report that the House provided increases in education funding this year. Furthermore, we have been working on H.R. 5, the Augustus F. Hawkins and Robert T. Stafford Elementary and Secondary Education Improvement Amendments of 1988. That bill, which was signed by the President in April, is a major reauthorization of all federal elementary and secondary education programs. I am pleased with the strong bipartisan support given the bill as was evident by the overwhelming votes for passage in both Houses of Congress. Contained within H.R. 5, now P.L. 100-297, is a program on which I have been working called Even Start. Yes, I wish it were a $50 billion program, but I am mighty proud that I was able to get an authorization for the program for $50 million. This program brings pre-school-age children and their functionally illiterate parents into an educational setting. It is designed to teach those parents to read as you bring the child into education readiness. Recent NAEP results support the importance of this approach by their findings that parents' education attainment is the best predictor of their children's reading ability.

When I first introduced Even Start, the Secretary of Education told me "it sounds like a good idea, but the way children learn to read is to sit on their parents' lap and get stories read to them." I said "Mr. Secretary, I was talking about youngsters from functionally illiterate and illiterate homes; who is going to know what book to buy?"

I want to leave this with a positive note. You have a great responsibility ahead of you. You must bring to the attention of the American public what the problem is, what the costs will be, and possible solutions. Only then will we be ready to combat the problems of literacy and education in this country. ■

Mark White

First, let me say that I am sure the Republicans thank God for Bill Goodling, because without him they wouldn't have an education program.

I happen to be from a state where I thought education was all important. Well, it wasn't quite as important on election day as I thought it was. But let me assure you that many of the things Jonathan has said people ought to be doing in education I believe we have tried to do in Texas.

We have raised standards at the same time we have built compassionate programs to help make certain young people who are unable to achieve those standards will be given such an opportunity. We've decided it was a lot cheaper to try to teach children to read in the first grade than in the ninth grade. We found there were many children coming into our schools who did not understand the language in which instruction was being given. So we adopted a mandatory statewide program of instruction for four-year-olds who do not have English as a first language that's been very effective. At that age, I believe even I could have learned Spanish.

Quite frankly, we are seeing new funding supplied for those [new] programs, we are seeing new funding supplied for poor school districts... [The way you can tell the rich school districts in West Texas from the poor school districts in West Texas is that the rich school districts have air-conditioned school buses. And if you've ever been to San Angelo, Texas, you might go and see a wonderful football facility as you arrive from the airport. It's fabulous—I thought it belonged to Angelo State University. I found out that it belonged to Angelo Independent School District. It is a fabulous facility. The Houston Oilers go there for spring training, which makes you realize that good facilities don't necessarily make a good football team.]

The point is that there is a question we should all ask—Democrats and Republicans—American citizens: Where are we spending these education dollars? A lot of our districts like to buy buses—it just gives great pride to see them out there looking over those yellow school buses. Yet, they refuse to pay salaries to school teachers.

Look at your athletic programs. We've got one of the best, and I understand that they are starting to blame me for the fact that we have deemphasized athletics and the University of Texas hasn't defeated the University of Oklahoma in football in four years. Usually they fire the coach. Last time, they

fired the governor.

If the Congress and the presidential candidates will take action that they claim that they are willing to take, then I have great hopes for the future of our country. I am a little bit disturbed over the depth of the analysis that they have put into this. I'm sure that George Bush has more than two pages in which he would like to talk about education. Jesse Jackson has two pages that have more [substance] — it's single spaced and everybody knows he can say more with fewer words than any of the other candidates. I think if you will read what Jesse Jackson has to say, that he speaks to those very bottom line issues, about starting off early.

I think the advantage Mike Dukakis has is the fact that he has had the opportunity to be governor and do something. That's one of the problems that we have in the Congress. They are handicapped because no matter what they do, the leader—the President—determines what is going to occur after they have done it. They can generate the programs and appropriate the funds and if the Administration doesn't want to spend it, they impound funds, refuse to spend money. The Congress sets these policies, the President is supposed to execute them. If this President had done to the military what he has done to education, it would be referred to as unilateral disarmament.

We have talked a good fight, but this Administration has failed to produce. We have heard the expressions of *A Nation at Risk* and can you believe what they have failed to do over the last five years about it? Almost every single progressive step that has occurred has occurred not because of the Administration but in spite of it. It's occurred because of the leadership of good governors—Republicans and Democrats alike—such as Lamar Alexander and Governors Kean, Clinton and Dukakis, throughout these United States, who have tried to set a higher standard and to correct a weak [school] system.

So what I think we must do is to join together—Democrat and Republican alike, President and Congress alike—and agree upon an agenda that, quite frankly, goes above this business of which schools get how many dollars. Quite frankly, this is just as important as military defense to the success of our nation. And to do what Jonathan has said. He refers to it as a Marshall Plan for education. If there's one federal plan that has paid more dividends than any other, it was probably the GI bill. It made more tax payers, it made more productive citizens than probably any other act of Congress, and I don't know why we have to send people to war in order to recognize the results of the GI bill.

It's time for this nation to recognize the wasted talents that will occur and reoccur if we don't act now. That's why I'm proud to be here as a Democrat. That's why I'm proud to put forth the policies of a Jesse Jackson, an Al Gore, and a Mike Dukakis. And I would be ashamed to stand up today and say after eight years of opportunities that we have come no further than we have in recognizing the dangers and failing to take action. What worse indictment can be given to an Administration? ■

EWA Board of Directors and Staff

President: James Killackey, senior reporter, *The Daily Oklahoman*, 500 North Broadway, Oklahoma City, OK 73125. (405) 231-3208.

Vice President/Active: Marilyn Posner, assistant news editor, *Observer-Reporter*, 122 South Main Street, Washington, PA 15301. (412) 222-2200.

Vice President/Associate: John Ross, Vice President, College Connections, 329 East 82nd Street, New York, NY 10028. (212) 734-2190.

Secretary: Larry Hayes, editorial page editor, *Fort Wayne Journal-Gazette*, 600 West Main Street, Fort Wayne, IN 46802. (219) 461-8208.

Directors:

Robert Frahm, education reporter, *The Hartford Courant*, 285 Broad Street, Hartford, CT 06115. (203) 241-6535.

Susan Knight, education reporter, *Arizona Daily Star*, 4850 S. Park Avenue, Tucson, AZ 85714. (602) 573-4204.

Maurice Sykes, assistant director of communications, D.C. Public Schools, 415 12th Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20004. (202) 724-4044.

Aleta Watson, education reporter, *San Jose Mercury News*, 750 Ridder Park Drive, San Jose, CA 95190. (408) 920-5032.

Immediate Past President: Michael Bowler, op-ed editor, *Baltimore Sun*, 501 North Calvert Street, Baltimore, MD 21203. (301) 332-6019.

Executive Director: Lisa J. Walker
Associate Director: John E. Rankin
Program Associate : Bert Menninga

Education Writers Association, 1001 Connecticut Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036

The Education Writers Association, founded in 1947, is the professional association of education reporters and writers. Its project on literacy was established to help journalists cover the issue of illiteracy/literacy in ways that reflect the complexities and far-reaching implications of the issues. This paper is one of several commissioned during 1988 that deal with specific facets of literacy and was first presented on April 16, 1988, at the EWA National Seminar in New Orleans, Louisiana. Others look at literacy in the context of the newspaper reading habits of young adults, math literacy, and the reporting on and coverage of literacy and poverty in the United States. EWA maintains a clearinghouse of resources about literacy and publishes a monthly newsletter, *The Literacy Beat*. The staff is prepared to help writers make contacts or otherwise obtain ideas and information about the issue of literacy. Please contact Lisa Walker, executive director, or Anne Lewis, consultant, at 1001 Connecticut Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036; (202) 429-9680.